

TWICKENHAM DRAMA
FESTIVALTTC WORKSHOP WIN
YOUTH FESTIVAL

31/5/61

TEDDINGTON Theatre Club Workshop became the second holders of my cup on Saturday when they won the Borough of Twickenham drama festival at Whitton Secondary School. The only other competing team was from **Twickenham Youth Players**, last year's winners.

The adjudicator, Mr. Francis Hallatt, who teaches drama and English at the school, had the unenviable task of deciding between pieces of such dissimilarity as the trial scene from "**The Merchant of Venice**" and the Stuart Ready melodrama, "**Down to the Seas**." He decided in favour of the workshop's "**Merchant**" because Shakespeare was infinitely harder to attack. At the same time he thought it a pity that someone had to be chosen the winner.

PRAISE FOR PORTIA

Adjudicating on "**The Merchant**," Mr. Hallatt thought the company did exceptionally well, but there was a lack of tension from the crowd. He wanted more reaction and more movement. The scene came to life as soon as the first lady (Anne Cartwright) spoke. He thought the make-up and voices of the Duke (Stephen Malton) and Shylock (Paul Reynolds) very good. But he criticised the placing of the Duke in the centre.

He gave most praise to Julia Wragg for her Portia. She had such beautiful hand movements, he said. He wished that the rest of the cast would learn something about gestures. He also commended the way Julia put over "**The quality of mercy**" speech.

"**Down to the Seas**" depended on mood, atmosphere and characterisation. The adjudicator thought that Twickenham Youth Players failed to bring off the climax, and it was one of

those plays where the climax was the whole point.

Of the cast he picked out James Holden, who played the father of the seafaring family, for a very fine effort. Michael Stockbridge, as the son who wants to desert the sea for the land, had the most difficult part. His love scenes with Isabel Williamson wanted more warmth.

At Mr. Hallatt's request book tokens were awarded to Julia Wragg and James Holden for the best performances of the evening.

AIMING HIGH

I think Mr. Hallatt did right in awarding the cup to Teddington Theatre Club Workshop for I believe that it is better for a team to aim high even if it fails in achievement. At the same time the best all-round acting came from Twickenham Youth Players.

The costumes worn by the Teddington team were most effective. They were all made by the young people themselves, mainly by three girls. Many of them had been converted from those worn in "**Our Town**." Shylock's robes were made from old curtains.

I echo the hope expressed by Mr. Hallatt that more youth groups will compete in future. It is not easy to maintain a youth group owing to the inevitable changes through age. The schools might help, and I was glad to learn from one of the Whitton Secondary School staff that a team might be entered from there.

To fill up the programme **Twickenham Community Players** repeated their performance of Eugene O'Neill's "**Where the Cross is Made**," with which they won their way into the London divisional final of the B.D.L. festival. It was a generous action on their part for only the evening before they had given "**Ghosts**" at South Kensington, and that afternoon they had been running a stall at the Thames Valley Guild fair.

The cup was presented to the winners by the Mayor of Twickenham (Councillor Mrs. Margaret Davies).